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## THE FEDERAL DIARY

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*Administration Loses Round in Rules Changes*

The Reagan administration lost a game yesterday in the complicated chess match being played to determine what rules Uncle Sam follows when it comes time to hand out raises, promotions or pink slips among the government's 1.1 million white-collar workers.

What happened is that the House committee with jurisdiction over the civil service yesterday asked its sister committee, which handles the government's allowance, not to give the president any money this year or next for an overhaul of the government's work rules.

By a 17-to-4 vote, the Post Office and Civil Service Committee urged the powerful Appropriations Committee to forbid agencies from spending money to implement changes that would downplay seniority and base employees' eligibility for raises or RIFs on their performance.

The Appropriations Committee is working on budgets for federal agencies for the 1984 fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. Earlier, one of its subcommittees working on a supplemental budget request banned the administration from making any of its rules changes for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Two Republicans, Frank Wolf of Virginia and Benjamin Gilman of New York, joined 15 Democrats on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee in the move to deny funds for the rules changes until Congress has a chance to consider them. The committee, which has jurisdiction over most legislation affecting federal workers, has already made it clear it does not support the changes or trust the administration's motives for making them.

"They've tried these end runs before to get around Congress," a committee staffer said yesterday, "and it just won't wash. Congress is getting fed up with this kind of tactic, of attempting to do something by a rules change that should be handled by Congress."

Chairman William Ford (D-Mich.) and Democrats on the committee have shot down a number of Reagan's personnel proposals.

"This is very interesting," an OPM official said yesterday, "a legislative committee asking an appropriations

committee to do its work! I see. The name of the game is if you don't like the rules, change them."

The comment period is up at the end of the month on the proposed rules changes on pay, promotions and RIFs. Those changes would set up a standardized government rating system and would base within-grade pay raises and certain promotions on performance rather than seniority. Employees would be protected from RIFs on their performance ratings rather than their length of time in government.

After it studies the comments, OPM will propose performance-over-seniority job rules changes and it hopes to have some of them in effect by October.

Opponents of the changes—and this includes virtually all federal worker unions and professional groups—are counting on Congress to block them via the appropriations process.

But a number of House Republicans, including several members of the Post Office Committee, have written GOP members of the Appropriations Committee asking them not to get into the rules-change fight. Their letter said that blocking the rules changes would be an "uncalled for intrusion in an orderly administrative procedure . . . and we urge that any such language [blocking the changes] be removed from any spending bill . . . ."

House Democrats have the votes to block the rules changes, if they wish to do so. "The problem," a Democratic staffer said, "is that people have short attention spans on civil service matters" and it might be difficult to sustain any opposition.

**Managing Local Governments:**

The American Society for Public Administration and the International City Management Association will have a half-day seminar Friday at George Mason University. Subject is effective management of local government units. Wayne F. Anderson, Virginia's secretary of administration and finance, will keynote the session. For details call 323-2198.

**Jobs:** The Army in Warrenton is

looking for a Grade 9/11 personnel manager. Call (703) 347-6307.